

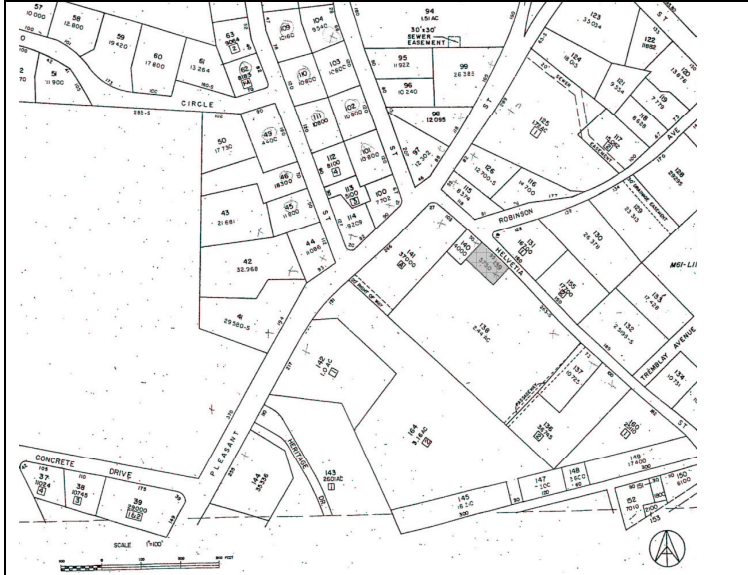
FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Julie Ann Larry
Organization: ttl-architects
Date (month / year): March 2010

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

47 139

TEW.

Town: Tewksbury

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)
Tewksbury Center

Address: 17 Helvetia Street

Historic Name: Richmond T Gale House

Uses: Present: Single-family Residence

Original: Single-family Residence

Date of Construction: 2nd Quarter 20th century

Source: Historic Maps and Census Records

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Vinyl Siding

Roof: Asphalt Shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: Fair

Moved: no | | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 0.13 Acres

Setting: Set on a relatively flat lot on the edge of the village center.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TEWKSBURY

17 HELVETIA STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

TEW.

___ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The house at 17 Helvetia Street is a one-and-a-half story side hall dwelling with a projecting one-and-a-half story gable bay on the north side. The first floor of the bay is a cut away bay window. An addition to the south has resulted in an L-shaped plan. The one-and-a-half story addition projects from the side (south) of the dwelling and a one-story full width porch projects from the east of the main façade. The hip roof of the porch is supported by square columns. The building rests on a concrete foundation. The walls are clad in vinyl siding. The front gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. A narrow brick chimney projects from the center of the roof's ridge. The three by three bay building has a side hall entrance with an oval glass pane. Windows on the original building are 2/2 sash windows flanked by shutters, while the bands of windows in the south addition have small vertical panes over a single pane lower sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The residence is one of several residences near the corner of Pleasant and Helvetia Streets that are associated with the Gale family. John T Gale of Lowell purchased a large lot of land from Perry Jefferson (MHC# TEW.39) in 1904. The deed indicates that the land came with the promise to lay out a portion of a new road (Helvetia Street) from Chandler Street to Pleasant Street.

Between 1890 and 1915 the Town of Tewksbury began to develop as a market gardening community. Greenhouses for nurseries and market gardening were constructed throughout the town to grow produce to sell in nearby cities. John T Gale Sons Wholesale Florist was established on the west side of the newly laid out Helvetia Street c1905. Between WWI and WWII Tewksbury became known as a carnation town as many of the town's green houses produced flowers commercially. The existing garage building at 35 Helvetia Street was built during this period of expansion for the local floral industry c 1930. In the late 20th century many of these greenhouse operations were abandoned. While some greenhouses have been completely demolished and others remain unused and deteriorating, the Gale greenhouse operation is still active. The existing greenhouses were installed in 1981. Cut flowers grown by John T Gale Sons include sweet peas and snap dragons.

John T Gale was born in England in 1875 and immigrated to America c1885¹. He was living in Tewksbury by 1900 where he was working as a laborer in a nursery. In 1901 he lived on Main Street. He married his first wife, Edna Harper in 1903 and their daughter Thelma was born the same year. They had three additional children: John Harper (1909-1999), Richmond (1911), and Edna (1913). Edna Harper Gale died c1914 and John T Gale married his second wife, Zorah, c1915.

Gale and his family members built several houses nearby including the John T Gale House at 82 Pleasant Street (built 1920-1930) TEW. ; the Thelma [Gale] Green House at 11 Helvetia Street TEW. ; the Richmond T Gale House at 17 Helvetia Street, and the John Harper Gale House at 24 Helvetia Street.

The house at **17 Helvetia Street** is the house of Richmond T Gale. Richmond Gale (1911-2005) attended local schools and Lowell High School. In WWII he served in the US Navy aboard the USS Iowa. Richmond T Gale Sr died in 2005 and the house is now owned by a family trust. Richmond T Gale was the husband of Ruth Gale. He worked with his father and brother John Harper Gale at John T. Gale Sons, Wholesale Florists. His son Richmond T Gale Jr and Randy Gale now operate the family business.

¹ 1910 United States Federal Census Record. Other census records indicate a different immigration date. In 1900, immigration in 1890 while the 1920 and 1930 census indicates an immigration in 1891.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TOWNSHIP

17 HELVETIA STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

TEW.



(L-R) John Harper Gale, Richmond Gale, Thelma Gale, Edna Gale [circa: 1919-1920] Tewksbury Historical Society Collection, 2001²

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

The Lowell Suburban directory of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro and Westford. Salem, MA: Henry M Meek. 1896-1897. 1905. 1911. 1913. 1915. 1917. 1919. 1922. 1925. 1927. 1930. 1932. 1937. 1940. 1945. 1949. 1951. 1953. 1959. 1961. 1968. 1971. 1972. 1975.

Tewksbury Street Directory. Mass: (s.n.) 1901. 1912.

Valuation of the Real and Personal Estate of the Town of Tewksbury for the Year. 1890. 1940. 1960.

Tewksbury List of Residents. 1965. 1975.

North Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.

Ancestry.com

Tewksbury Advertiser 2/11/99

² The Tewksbury Town Crier Sunday, January 11, 2009 10:06 AM EST

http://www.homenewshere.com/articles/2009/01/31/tewksbury_town_crier/news/doc496956a3679e8853664739.prt 4/2/2010